



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Member of Cross-Country Cocaine Conspiracy Sentenced to 12 Years in Prison

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Eric Pinno, age 41, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was sentenced today to 12 years in prison, followed by 5 years of supervised release for conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz also will issue an order to Pinno to forfeit \$442,338.

According to the statement of facts presented at his guilty plea on June 2, 2006, from 2004 through 2005 Steven Josephs supplied Eric Pinno with multiple kilograms of cocaine, which Pinno then distributed to buyers in the Pittsburgh area. The cocaine was transported across the country from California to Maryland by individuals who drove tractor trailers and other vehicles.

The drivers carried U.S. currency in the opposite direction from Maryland to California. During the conspiracy, Pinno distributed between 50 kilograms and 150 kilograms of cocaine. Law enforcement agents seized \$442,338 in U.S. currency from Pinno during the course of the investigation. They also seized a handgun during a search of Pinno's house.

Steven Josephs pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine, on November 14, 2005. He faces a maximum penalty of life in prison and a fine of \$4,000,000. His sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked special agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for their investigative work in this case. Mr. Rosenstein also praised Assistant United States Attorney Paul M. Tiao, who is prosecuting the case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.